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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Idaho National Laboratory offers first University conducted experiments through Advanced Test Reactor National Scientific User Facility

INL's Advanced Test Reactor National Scientific User Facility (ATR NSUF) today issued the first 'call for user proposals' to colleges and universities to conduct irradiation experiments in the Advanced Test Reactor and post-irradiation examinations in INL hot cells and analytical laboratories. During 2008, the first year of User Facility operation, INL will sponsor at least two university-led pilot experiments awarded on a competitive basis.

"Today's announcement is a major step forward in opening the doors of the Advanced Test Reactor to broader use by U.S. colleges and universities for investigation of the behavior of fuels and materials," said U.S. Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Dennis Spurgeon. "Collaborations between universities and DOE user facilities are critical to scientific breakthrough and to prepare a new generation of engineers and scientists for the energy challenges of today and tomorrow."

Colleges and universities have until late January to submit proposals for irradiation and post irradiation examination research projects. A peer review team of experts from INL and outside institutions will evaluate the proposals and select experiments by March 2008. Award of a project will also result in award of student research internship opportunities for each participating institution.

Successful applicants - faculty and students - will begin working with the ATR NSUF in spring 2008, to design, build and prepare to insert research experiments in the Advanced Test Reactor. The experiment process typically requires three years to complete. The scientific results of the experiments will be openly published for use by other nuclear researchers.

Mitchell Meyer, INL acting director for the ATR NSUF, says the proposals should support current DOE nuclear energy research and development programs, such as materials testing, advanced nuclear fuel development and advanced in-reactor instrumentation, and be nonproprietary in nature. Research teams consisting of more than one university, or teams including both and universities with industry partners, are encouraged.

"We want to bring the world's best researchers to Idaho to use the world's best facilities for nuclear energy development," Meyer said. "The goal of the User Facility is to make it easier to conduct the research needed to continue development of nuclear energy as a safe, clean, carbon-free energy source. This involves both fundamental and applied research."

Research proposals may be submitted through the ATR NSUF web site at www.inl.gov. This system allows potential users to register and submit proposals online by answering questions about the proposed experiment, providing biographical information on the principal investigator(s), providing a proposal abstract or summary, and providing the detailed research proposal, including project objectives, significance, schedule, description of the research, how the research contributes to the state-of-the knowledge in the field, and its benefit to advancing nuclear energy.

Each year, the National Scientific User Facility will seek additional proposals so that there is a continual cycle of collaborative experiments involving colleges, universities, industrial partners and INL researchers.

In April of 2007, the U.S. Department of Energy established the Advanced Test Reactor National Scientific User Facility to make the Idaho National Laboratory's world-class nuclear research capabilities more easily available to energy researchers in the U.S. and abroad.

Additional information on the Department of Energy's nuclear energy initiatives may be found at www.nuclear.energy.gov. Additional information on the Idaho National Laboratory may be found at www.inl.gov.

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